

Chapter Five

The Master Teacher

Qualifications

The master teacher is the single most important person involved in the teacher training course. He or she should have the following qualifications:

- **Strong Dance Skills:** To train teachers who can dance well, you will need a strong and experienced dancer.
- **Great Personality:** The master teacher needs personal magnetism and strong interpersonal skills, both for commanding the respect of the trainees and for modeling good communication for your future teachers.
- **Teaching Experience:** The master teacher should be a seasoned instructor with experience teaching students of all levels and classes of all sizes.
- **Professional Certification:** Your master teacher should be professionally certified by an NDCA-approved dance organization, for two reasons.
 - *To Teach Effectively:* The *BDTC in a Box* lesson plans are designed to thoroughly and systematically teach your trainees the formal dance technique for the entire DVIDA® Bronze syllabus in Smooth, Rhythm, and Nightclub dances. To use the lesson plans effectively, the master teacher must know how to read figure charts and must understand the formal elements of each figure at a foundational level.
 - *To Prepare Trainees for Certification:* A dance teacher who has never taken an NDCA-recognized teaching exam is never called upon to know the technique inside and out the way it must be mastered for certification, and for teaching this course. Beyond looking and sounding better in your marketing materials, it simply makes sense for the master teacher to be someone who has personally experienced this rigorous process.
 - ✓ **If No Certified Teacher is Available:** If you do not have a certified teacher when your course begins, one solution is to let your master teacher get started, with an agreement that he or she will complete DVIDA® certification by a certain date.

Definitions

NDCA: National Dance Council of America, the major professional dance organization in the United States.

DVIDA: Dance Vision International Dance Association, an NDCA-recognized organization that provides syllabus manuals, professional certification, a student medal testing system, and other tools for professional dance teachers.

Master Teacher's Manuals: The seventeen books of lesson plans included in *BDTC in a Box*.

DVIDA® Manuals: Books produced by Dance Vision that contain the charts for the syllabus figures, as well as other essential dance information.

- **Enthusiasm and Patience for Beginners:** Because you will be marketing this course to prospective trainees with no dance experience, it is important that your master teacher have the willingness, kindness, patience, and even enthusiasm, to teach beginners. That is, the master teacher must want *everyone* to succeed. He or she must commit to the success of the course and each individual in it, using all the teaching and people skills he or she possesses to keep *everyone* going. The bottom line is that the master teacher is not only the master teacher, but also the school dean and counselor.

Every teacher training course based on *BDTC in a Box* should instill in its graduates a respect for the highest standards of our profession. This will happen if your master teacher embodies the standards of technical excellence, grace, enthusiasm, and patience that you want in your new teachers. Through the example of the master teacher, these standards will carry on to the next generation of professional dance instructors.

Responsibilities

The master teacher has a number of additional responsibilities beyond those of a regular group class teacher. We recommend that you spell out these responsibilities in a written document before the start of the course. See Appendix A for a sample master teacher contract.

The master teacher's responsibilities are as follows:

- **Prepare Before Each Class**
 - *Read the lesson plan(s) in the BDTC in a Box master teacher's manual.*
 - *Read any resource sheets to which the lesson plans refer.*
 - *If necessary, review figures to be taught.*
 - ✓ Read the figure's chart in the DVIDA[®] manual.
 - ✓ View the figure on the DVIDA[®] instructional video.
 - ✓ Practice the figure with another teacher or without a partner.
- **Bring to Class**
 - Music at the appropriate tempi
 - Master teacher's manual
 - DVIDA[®] manual and/or DVIDA App
 - Any other materials listed in the lesson plan overview
- **During Class:** Unlike a regular group class, the master teacher must teach how to dance *and how to teach.*
 - *Teach Material Outlined in Lesson Plans*
 - ✓ Figures
 - ✓ Technical dance terms and concepts

- ✓ Exercises to cultivate dance skills
- ✓ Teaching and presentation skills
- ✓ How to take professional certification exams
- *Homework Presentations*
 - ✓ Assign homework
 - ✓ Conduct presentations
 - ✓ Give feedback on presentations
- *Course Exams*
 - ✓ Explain theory presentations and solo amalgamations to trainees
 - ✓ Teach routines and other material outlined in the lesson plans
 - ✓ Conduct exams
- **Outside of Class**
 - Grade and provide feedback on written tests.
 - Find qualified replacements to teach the course if the master teacher is unavailable.
 - Conduct make-up theory presentations and solo amalgamations.
 - Conduct final comprehensive exams.
- **Other Possible Responsibilities**
 - *Supervise Administrative Assistant*
 - *Supervise the Class Monitor:* The master teacher can use a class monitor to assist with making announcements, distributing paperwork, collecting exams, taking attendance, and other routine tasks. If the master teacher chooses to do this, then the master teacher will need to:
 - ✓ Select a class monitor from among the trainees
 - ✓ Communicate with the class monitor about what the master teacher wants the monitor to do
 - *Supervise Exam Coaches*
 - *Collect Tuition*
 - ✓ For Studio-Based Courses: If your studio is offering the course, then tuition can be collected the same way as for other group classes.
 - ✓ For Independent Courses: If you are an independent instructor who purchased *BDTC in a Box* and are teaching the course in a rented space, then you will also collect trainees' tuition each month.

Guest Master Teachers

It is often a good idea to invite guest master teachers to teach certain classes or even to teach entire dances. This can give the master teacher a break from the intensive schedule and can greatly benefit the trainees as well. There are often instructors who are more experienced at certain dances (especially nightclub dances like Argentine Tango, Lindy Hop, or Salsa) than the master teacher, who may have more of a traditional ballroom background.

The same qualification requirements for master teachers apply for guest master teachers. In particular, they must be able to read, understand, and teach the formal technique elements of each syllabus figure, and they must have deep patience and enthusiasm for beginners.